

Chief, St/I

14 October 1955

Chief, D/S

Comments on [REDACTED] Reporting (ORR 9376)

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1. Attached are comments prepared in Services Division in response to your Staff Notice No. 15, 5 October 1955.

2. Your attention is invited particularly to the excessive use of restrictive classifications such as HFCUN, US Eyes Only, etc. The excessive use of these restrictions continually causes difficulties in our discussions and exchanges with foreign intelligence agencies.

3. Services Division would be most appreciative of any efforts designed to reduce the use of these restrictions, particularly in cases where the information so restricted was procured from the [REDACTED] or other [REDACTED] sources. A letter suffix to the document numbers could serve to indicate when the information was so procured.

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Attachments: 5

Distribution:

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2 -- D/S

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COMMENTS ON REPORTING

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I. Specific Criticisms

- a. Generally titles are well chosen, but are often incomplete (i.e. do not cover all subjects contained in report) or attempts to generalize frequently result in vagueness.
- b. Requirement and guide control members are cited when applicable.
- c. Source descriptions are presently not adequate and should be expanded to include sources' experience and competence to provide the information instead of only a reference to his general reliability or background.
- d. Frequent liaison with foreign intelligence Agencies is hindered by the extensive use of "Noform" control. Moreover, the absence of a distinction between classification for source protection and classification for protection of intelligence information should be remedied to facilitate use of the information among the greatest number of consumers.
- e. The CS system of source and content grading is used and understood. It is definitely not superfluous.
- f. Different although not wholly unrelated subjects are often combined in one report. From the analyst point of view it would be helpful to have each report restricted to a particular subject. If this is impossible, then unrelated subjects in the same report should be paragraphed and itemized.
- g. Generally the intelligence significance of the data is clearly presented.
- h. Information is generally well organized.
- i. The comments either by the field or [redacted] offices have been very useful in providing evidence of other confirming or non-confirming reports, etc. They should not be organized into the text. More rather than less of such comments would be desirable.

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II. General Criticisms

- a. Many reports are very fragmentary, but it would be better to have timely reporting of a fragment than to have such information held up for inclusion in a more general report at a later date. Fragmentary reports could be improved by more extensive comments.

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- b. More analytical reporting would be preferable so long as the analysis is not combined with the basic information received. Frequently, moreover, it would seem helpful if the source provided more interpretation of his information, but great care must be taken to identify his remarks as such. For instance, there have been many reports on East German coal imports falling substantially short of plan, but virtually no comment on the basic causes of this difficulty.
- c. More timely distribution of reports is an obviously appropriate goal, for it would improve performance of the Branch in its current support function. It cannot be said, however, that information is often too old to be useful.
- d. Much of the information provided by [] reports is not and probably cannot be duplicated by other sources. In any case, OS reports on subjects covered by other sources permits necessary cross checks and confirmation. 25X1A2g
- e. The quality of the information varies considerably between areas of the Sino-Soviet Bloc.
- f. Reports are written with reasonable clarity. However, statistics often are not clearly defined, particularly those involving technical terms relevant to transport facilities or their performance. As an example, the reference to "tons of railway traffic" leaves the analyst to determine if tons "originated" or tons "carried" is meant.

III. In the interest of more timely receipt of information, the Branch is prepared to accept occasionally untranslated material in Russian, German, Polish, French and Italian. However, the Branch is prepared to accept untranslated material of special value in any language.

IV. The quality of [] reports compares favorably with other report series received by the Branch. 25X1A2g

V. One of the major deficiencies of the data in reports, covered to some extent in comment II.f., is the lack of specific identification of what many reported figures represent. For instance, a railroad traffic total for a given year will rarely be qualified as to what elements of traffic are included and excluded (i.e. transit, narrow gauge, railroad use, etc.).

Another major deficiency is the scarcity of [] reporting on transportation in China and the USSR. Virtually the only source of the transportation information required on both areas is the Chinese and Soviet press and open literature. Censorship of these sources, therefore, would greatly reduce the effectiveness of the efforts of the Branch, since there are no alternatives available. The lack of OS reporting, moreover, precludes confirming the validity of open sources and creates the unfavorable predicament of having []

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MANHOURS IN CHECKING AND CROSSCHECKING THE OPEN SOURCES IN ORDER TO TEST THEIR VALIDITY.

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